



Report on the Hacienda Heights Community Plan Update Community Meeting June 19, 2010



MEETING OBJECTIVES

To: Present the Draft Hacienda Heights Community Plan and Initial Study; receive initial feedback from community members; and, provide information on public review.

EVENT DESCRIPTION

On the morning of Saturday, June 19, 2010, 55 participants from the Hacienda Heights community attended the meeting at the Steinmetz Senior Center, located within the LA County-operated William Steinmetz Memorial Park. The 90-minute meeting was designed to release the complete Draft Plan, and the accompanying Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, to residents. Lisbeth Sinclair and Veronica Siranosian from the Department of Regional Planning led and facilitated the meeting, which included: a brief update of the project progress to date, a short presentation of the materials for review (Draft Plan, Draft Initial Study); a summary of the supporting materials (Land Use Report, Zoning Consistency Study, Background Report); a demonstration on land use map designations (a layer-by-layer breakdown of map components and significant); an interactive "gallery walk" of the map series (proposed land use map, proposed zoning map, change maps and background maps); a question and answer session; and, time to sign up for Office Hours, where staff will be available in the community to answer questions and discuss the Plan one-on-one. Representatives from Supervisor Knabe's Office, Department of Parks and Recreation, the Community Development Commission, the Sanitation Districts, the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District and the Hacienda Heights Improvement Association were all in attendance.

MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting opened with a welcome from Ms. Sinclair and a short update on how the draft plan and supporting studies developed over the past several months. Ms. Sinclair gave a brief status report and reoriented the group to the highlights of the community planning process so far. She also gave a brief overview of several supporting documents that provide background information on plan development. Specifically: the Land Use Report, which contains the step-by-step methodology used to make land use decisions; the Zoning Consistency Study, which evaluates the relationship between land use and zoning, both existing and proposed; and, the Background Report, which is a compendium of data about the community. Ms. Sinclair presented the contents of the Draft Plan, information on where to find it, and several themes that distinguish the Plan from the 1978 Community Plan. She also shared examples of how the Plan ties together the community vision, goals, policies, implementation actions and land use map.

Next, Ms. Siranosian provided an overview of land use that included the definition, purpose, components, and reasons for completing a land use update. The land use map is being updated to implement the community's shared vision; reflect recent changes; anticipate future changes; ensure adequate resources will be available; direct development to the most suitable areas; preserve community character and assets; and, to be consistent with other plans. The presentation focused on broad concepts and community-wide impacts. The proposed land use map seeks to translate the community vision in a balanced and equitable way to the community overall, as well as to the neighborhoods and individual parcels.

Next, Ms. Siranosian presented an overview of the draft land use map developed by DRP staff with early input from committee members, as well as a "layer-by-layer" breakdown of the various land uses

contained in the map. Ms. Siranosian called out the most important changes to the proposed land use map, compared with the existing map, including:

- Maintenance of stable single- and multi-family residential areas
- Additional protection of rural and hillside areas
- Additional options for housing types in select areas
- Addition of new Public Land Use designation for existing public schools and utility easements
- Expansion of Open Space designation
 - Proposed for existing and planned parks, active and passive recreation areas
 - Habitat preservation areas added
- Maintenance of existing commercial and light industrial designations

Next, staff conducted a “gallery walk” to give participants the opportunity to evaluate the draft map and assess whether the proposed map corresponds with the community’s shared vision. Participants were divided into 2 large groups to view 2 identical Land Use Galleries that contained 11 x 17 color maps of each land use layer and large, poster size land use and zoning maps. The Land Use Legend (from the 2009 Draft Los Angeles County General Plan Update) and Land Use and Zoning Consistency Matrix were also posted in the galleries for reference. Another area had Land Use and Zoning Change Maps, which highlighted parcels that are changing. A final area had informational maps, including adopted Land Use and Zoning, Hazards and Overlays. Participants reviewed the draft maps on their own and marked on a low-to-high scale whether they felt the land use designations were in line with the community vision. Overall, the responses indicated that the land use designations were nearly completely consistent with the vision.

The groups reconvened for a Q-and-A session followed by a meeting recap and overview of next steps. A brief announcement was made about the availability of Hacienda Heights Community Plan Update layers in GIS-Net, and people were encouraged to explore the updated project website at planning.lacounty.gov/hacienda. Participants were asked to read the Draft Plan and to provide written comments by July 15, 2010 so that their comments and recommendations can be addressed and incorporated in advance of the formal public review and comment period slated to start in late July.

Finally, the planners announced a new tool called “Office Hours” for residents to consult with planners individually to address specific questions they may have about the draft and how the proposals affect their properties. Offices Hours will be held at the Steinmetz Senior Center on Thursday, June 24, from 1 PM to 4 PM and Tuesday, June 29, from 9 AM to 12 PM.

CONCLUSION

The morning meeting was a successful strategy for planners to reconnect with community members in a focused way to ensure that the draft materials, and the process for completing them, are progressing well. Enthusiasm for the Plan remains strong among the dedicated participants, and newcomers continue to be drawn into the process. Attendees gained an understanding of the importance of land use planning and their role in making the final determinations; and, the DRP staff gained further insight into the wishes and expectations of community members.

NEXT STEPS

- Update project website with meeting summary
- Organize and analyze results from exercise
- Revise Draft Plan based on feedback
- Follow-up mailing to all meeting participants
- Notice all residents of public hearing(s), once scheduled